— To consider encouraging foreign private investment in the power sector and include provisions for such participation within the ambit of the general policy frame-work of liberalisation of foreign investment in the country. It will be necessary that as an integral part of liberalisation measures simplification of the procedure for considering applications for foreign private sector participation in the power sector is achieved by establishment of a High Powered Board for single point clearance of applications in this regard. The High Powered Board would comprise of Secretaries of the concerned Ministries/ Departments in the Union Government and co-option of senior State Government representatives as required.

— Captive generating units are being encouraged to sell/distribute surplus power to SEBs on the basis of contractual agreement and standardised two part tariff.

— Necessary amendments to the Electricity Acts are being brought out shortly.

— A Special Cell is proposed to be created in Department of Power to deal with proposals expeditiously for private sector participation.

Use of Natural Gas in place of Petrol

343. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:
SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared any time bound action plan for use of natural gas in various sectors to conserve petrol and other petroleum products in view of abundance of its availability; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and if not, what are the impediments?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government has a time bound plan for the utilisation of natural gas. Available onshore gas in Gujarat, Assam and Andhra Pradesh has already been committed to downstream users. Available gas from the Western offshore region is brought to two shore terminal at Urban (near Bombay) and Hazira (in Gujarat) from where it is supplied to downstream users near Bombay or in the States of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, through the HBJ pipeline. In order to optimise the economic use of gas its imputed value in various sectors is kept in mind while allocating it among the various sectors.

Launching of Literacy Mission

344. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD:
SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a massive literacy mission involving millions of students has been launched; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?